CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT

CD/PV.829
24 June 1999

ENGLISH

FINAL RECORD OF THE EIGHT HUNDRED AND TWENTY-NINTH PLENARY MEETING

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,
on Thursday, 24 June 1999, at 10.15 a.m.

President: Mr. Guillermo Enrique González (Argentina)

GE.99-62884 (E)

The PRESIDENT (translated from Spanish): I declare open the 829th plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament.

I have on my list of speakers for this meeting the representatives of Ecuador, India, the United Kingdom and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. However, before I call on the first speaker on my list, I should like to make a few remarks of a preliminary nature as Argentina takes over the presidency of the Conference on Disarmament.

I am fully aware that I am coming to this presidency by the inexorable drive of the alphabet. For all that it is no less of an honour and a responsibility for me and for the country I represent to be able to preside over the work of the only international forum dedicated to negotiating disarmament issues.

At the beginning of this term of office I wish to highlight the work done by my predecessors during the present session. Ambassadors Grey of the United States of America, Rodríguez Cedeño of Venezuela and Binh of Viet Nam did everything in their power to enable the Conference on Disarmament to begin its substantive work without delay. Special mention must be made of the endeavours of my immediate predecessor, Ambassador Mohamed-Salah Dembri. The masterly fashion in which he conducted the business of this body as the previous President made it possible, as he said himself at the end of his term, for the Conference to be closer today than ever to reaching agreement on a programme of work. Knowing the personal and professional qualities of the Permanent Representative of Algeria, I was sure that matters could not be otherwise. Ambassador Dembri, a long-standing colleague and friend, enjoys our wholehearted esteem and admiration. I have requested him, and he has been kind enough to agree, in the spirit of service for which he has always been noted, to continue to work and cooperate in all the activities of the Conference aimed at overcoming the prevailing difficulties.

After four Presidential terms, the Conference on Disarmament has before it proposals that cover every aspect of its agenda. At the same time, the consultations carried out by my predecessors have enabled me to come to this post with a fairly clear idea of delegations' positions. These elements bear witness to the continuity with which the Conference on Disarmament has been carrying out its work. I began consultations this week, starting from the point which they had reached during Ambassador Dembri's term of office, and I hope to continue with them. In the present circumstances, we have to remember that the political will of member States of the Conference is the only instrument that enables us to adopt decisions. The President of the Conference on Disarmament may, through consultations and any suggestions he may make, encourage and pave the way for consensus, but he can never replace the will of the parties. The agreement towards which we are working cannot be the responsibility of a single delegation or group of countries, or the President of the CD. Agreement has to be the outcome of concessions made by all parties, so as to arrive at a balanced solution that takes account of the interests of all members. Nor should the programme of work we are seeking be perceived as something imposed. It would be difficult for a programme adopted without conviction to meet with success at the implementation stage. I must

(The President)

also remind you that the expansion of the membership of the Conference, with the inclusion of the five new members proposed by the Special Coordinator, is also a decision that is pending before this Conference. I shall make every possible effort to finalize that matter.

The Conference on Disarmament is a body on which external events undoubtedly have a considerable influence. At the same time, what happens here sends a clear signal to the outside world. I sincerely believe that the adoption of a balanced and comprehensive programme of work, and the subsequent initiation of consultations, studies and negotiations, would constitute a message of encouragement for the international community.

In taking the Chair I am aware that after this week we shall have the second annual break in the work of the Conference, two thirds of the annual meetings having taken place. I hope the recess that we will begin on Monday next will serve as a pause for thought. A useful time to enable the parties especially concerned by the topics still to be settled to reassess their positions and maintain contacts with one another. We require and need more activity. Naturally from the Chair we shall do everything possible, and a little more, to strive to promote such a dialogue and achieve a positive outcome of this term of office.

I now have pleasure in giving the floor to the first speaker on my list, Ambassador Luis Gallegos-Chiriboga of Ecuador.

Mr. GALLEGOS-CHIRIBOGA (Ecuador) (translated from Spanish): Mr. President, I would like to convey to you, first of all, my delegation's satisfaction at seeing you preside over the work of the Conference on Disarmament at its current session. I am convinced that your extensive experience and capabilities will promote progress in our work. The delegation of Ecuador offers you maximum cooperation in your delicate and important responsibilities. I would also like to express my gratitude to the Presidents who have preceded you in this difficult post and have demonstrated notable devotion to the tasks of the Conference. Lastly, I would like to express my appreciation to Mr. Vladimir Petrovsky, the Secretary-General of the Conference, and his deputy, Mr. Abdelkader Bensmail, as well as all the staff of the secretariat, for their readiness to help and their assistance.

The Conference on Disarmament is an organ of the international community whose objective is multilateral negotiations on disarmament, which constitutes one of the cornerstones of the collective security system. This philosophy of international relations is an intrinsic feature of the United Nations and calls for our participation and action in matters which are of concern to all mankind. The current session of the Conference on Disarmament will be the last to be held this century. The symbolic significance of the year 2000 is an additional opportunity for the ongoing search for world peace, on the basis of policies inspired by the ethical and moral responsibility of States. All peoples without distinction seek peace and the elimination of all types of weapons, but most particularly they seek to see disarmament giving priority to the instruments of mass destruction. The world of the twentieth century has seen the most significant technological progress, just as it has generated the

(Mr. Gallegos-Chiriboga, Ecuador)

most bloody events in the history of mankind. As the century draws to an end, the tensions of war and peace still persist on the planet. The factors which give rise to armed conflicts and sustain them are a sad reality of the present day: there are conflicts still to be resolved and huge arsenals ready for destructive use.

The difficulties in giving momentum to practical negotiations on disarmament reveal a lack of agreement on the global agenda and substantive action in terms of security in the post-cold-war world. The fact that it is impossible to achieve consensus reflects the insecurities of a world which has not yet determined the new outlines of the new international order or brought its operation into line with the realities of the present. It gives the impression that we still do not attach true historic significance to what occurred 10 years ago, when the Berlin Wall came down, and that the world is faced with a new political paradigm without a clear idea of its dangers and opportunities. The end of the cold war finds us still caught up in conflict and mistrust: we must move forward in studying the factors which promote them with the aim of constructing a modus vivendi of peace, progress and development for all nations. The words of the Agenda for Development are very appropriate for the purposes of this Conference, because they call for the reduction of excessive military expenditure, so as to permit the earmarking of additional resources for economic and social development.

Ecuador agrees with the majority of the community of States concerning the importance which should be attached to the issue of nuclear disarmament on the international agenda. My country has always been committed to this priority, which was officially laid down at the first special session of the General Assembly in 1978. Nuclear disarmament is a matter for, and the responsibility of, everyone, and this leads us to welcome the bilateral and other efforts made to promote progress in this regard. Ecuador supports and will always provide its backing to any effort directed towards complete nuclear disarmament, this being an objective which will be facilitated by a system of non-proliferation that is effective and addresses the security interests of all States. On this issue, I would like to emphasize Ecuador's approval of the International Court of Justice's advisory opinion of 8 July 1996, as a country committed to the cause and advancement of international law. The ICJ laid down that the obligation to pursue and bring to a conclusion negotiations leading to nuclear disarmament in all its aspects is not subordinated to general and complete disarmament; and that this obligation falls on all States. We should remember that the General Assembly of the United Nations requested this advisory opinion, which, while it does not have a binding character, does constitute an input to the formation and development of international law.

My country believes that multilateral and bilateral efforts to promote nuclear disarmament should complement one another and should strengthen a permanent dynamic. These two paths of action should maintain their rate of advance. In this regard, Ecuador shares the concern expressed on many occasions by members of the international community as to the lack of progress in the process of ratifying START II and the delay in beginning the negotiations on START III. My country welcomes the recent contacts between

(Mr. Gallegos-Chiriboga, Ecuador)

Russia and the United States to reactivate the process which should lead to the signing of START III. We predict that concrete understandings will be reached very soon on this important matter.

Where multilateral efforts to promote disarmament are concerned, Ecuador supports the aims of nuclear non-proliferation. Ecuador shares the view that the international non-proliferation regime should be preserved, its credibility re-established and its future assured. We therefore believe it is appropriate to embark on the multilateral negotiation of understandings which will consolidate various aspects relating to curbing the development of atomic weapons. This is the case for the signing of a treaty on fissile material. In 1998 the CD agreed to establish an ad hoc committee to negotiate a treaty to prohibit the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons and other nuclear explosives. General Assembly resolution 53/77 I, which was adopted without a vote, calls on the CD "to re-establish [its] ad hoc committee at the beginning of its 1999 session". My delegation believes there are bases for a consensus which could lead us to negotiations on this matter, which, if it were to result in a treaty, would make a special contribution to the international non-proliferation regime.

Negative security assurances, meaning a commitment by States which possess nuclear weapons not to use them, nor to threaten to use them against countries which do not have such weapons, should be universalized by means of an international regime. The declarations by States which possess such weapons and have renounced their use against those who do not have such weapons are very positive. Such declarations are noteworthy and for my country are legally binding in the terms in which the scope of these unilateral acts are materialized in international law. However, Ecuador believes that they cannot in the long term be a substitute for a multilateral instrument adopted following a process of negotiations with formal provisions for compliance.

From the strategic subject of nuclear disarmament I now move on to another whose humanitarian consequences have aroused universal awareness of its importance on the United Nations disarmament agenda. Ecuador welcomes the progress made with regard to the elimination of anti-personnel mines, particularly the Ottawa Convention and Protocol II to the 1981 Convention on Conventional Weapons (1996). My country signed the Ottawa Convention in December 1998 and deposited its instrument of ratification in April this year. We should also note the resolution adopted within the Organization of American States, which establishes the objective of making the American continent a zone free of anti-personnel mines. In this same region, another important development in this respect stems from the action taken by various countries to ensure that Central America is free of mines of this sort by the year 2000. Ecuador agrees with the view that this is the most appropriate time to begin preparatory work for the second conference which will review the 1981 Convention, and which must be held by the year 2001 at the latest. In this respect I would like to note that a decision was taken at the Maputo meeting that the preparatory meetings of expert committees should be held in Geneva and that the second meeting of States parties should be held in the year 2000 in this same city.

(Mr. Gallegos-Chiriboga, Ecuador)

The subject of anti-personnel mines and their elimination is of particular interest for my country. After the signing of the peace agreement in October 1998, Ecuador and Peru agreed to remove and destroy all anti-personnel mines which were placed along their frontier. We are sure that the international community will cooperate in the demining programme drawn up by the two countries. On behalf of Ecuador, I would like to extend in advance our gratitude to the countries and organizations which have made and announced their contributions to this cause.

Allow me to refer very particularly to certain specific aspects of disarmament which are a focus for the attention of this Conference and the expectations of the international community. The entry into force of the Convention on Chemical Weapons, the constant increase in the number of States parties and the operation of the Organization set up to verify the application of its provisions is a significant step which has won deserved recognition from the international community. My country also welcomes the prospects for the strengthening of the chemical disarmament regime. We believe this example should be followed in the matter of biological weapons. We share the view that there is an urgent need to take all necessary steps to avoid the proliferation and use of biological weapons. This priority has been recognized by States through the commitment to conclude the drafting of a protocol before the Fifth Review Conference of the 1972 Convention which is due to meet by the year 2001 at the latest.

As is well known, various countries in my region, including Ecuador, have signed and ratified the Inter-American Convention against the Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, Ammunition, Explosives, and Other Related Materials. The subject of illegal transfers of conventional weapons is a problem which aggravates violence in all parts of the world, in particular where there are outstanding disputes or long-standing conflicts. Given the international dimension of these problems and their serious implications for the security of huge areas of the planet, the delegation of Ecuador believes it is important to study how the CD might apply its technical capabilities and its role as a rallying point with a view to establishing a regime which would deal with the subject of the illicit transfer of conventional weapons. The conference to be held in Geneva before the year 2001 would offer an opportunity to make significant progress on this matter.

In 1967 the international community agreed on the principles which should govern States in their exploration and use of outer space. Where disarmament is concerned, the treaty stipulates that activities of States should be carried out exclusively for peaceful purposes. The space treaty prohibits the placing in orbit around the Earth of nuclear weapons or any kinds of weapons of mass destruction. Thirty years of unprecedented technological progress have occurred since then, and a growing number of States are capable of placing objects in space. Ecuador believes that the military applications of space need to be studied in order to avoid the beginning of an arms race, which would be contrary to the provisions of the treaty and to the principles of the security of peoples. In this regard, my

(Mr. Gallegos-Chiriboga, Ecuador)

country notes the legal obligation of all States to comply strictly with the provisions of the 1967 treaty, particularly with regard to the exclusively peaceful use of outer space. Noting that no country voted against General Assembly resolution 53/76, Ecuador is confident that there are positive elements which will facilitate the building of the necessary consensus in this regard.

Before concluding my statement, I must refer to the proposal submitted to the CD in February 1999, for the admission of Ireland, Kazakhstan, Malaysia, Tunisia and Ecuador as members of the forum. The proposal was the result of broad consultations conducted in 1997 and 1998 by Ambassador Hofer of Switzerland, who presented a report where Ecuador figures among a group of five new members of the CD. Almost 15 years have passed since the presentation of my country's request to become a member of the Conference on Disarmament. In those 15 years my country has distinguished itself by always seeking to reconcile different positions in the interests of international peace and security. We are all aware, as another country stated at one stage, of the public and private history of this delay. The CD is a negotiating body where disagreements and different viewpoints can and surely must exist. But this is the essence of democracy. As cooperation in the pursuit of common objectives is vital for democracy. The CD needs to agree on its programme of work for 1999. It is our desire, shared by the five States mentioned earlier, that the adoption of this programme should be accompanied by a decision on the admission of the five new members. In this way the CD will recognize the intense efforts undertaken in 1997 and 1998. We hope that there will be a favourable decision on this matter in the immediate future. Of course, the Conference will also have to agree on the appointment of a new special coordinator to conduct consultations on future expansion following the admission of the five. Once it is a member of the CD, Ecuador will cooperate with the forum on the basis of the principles of its foreign policy and its commitment to the cause of disarmament. As soon as it is admitted to the CD, as a member of the Non-Aligned Movement, Ecuador will seek to participate in the G-21, and to support and contribute to the work of this Conference.

To conclude, I would like to thank the members of the Conference on Disarmament who, by an overwhelming majority, supported Ecuador's membership. My appreciation for the public and private views expressed on behalf of the people, Government and delegation of Ecuador. I express my hope for the continuous and successful progress of the work of our Conference. There are few forums such as this whose decisions have so much influence over the lives and well-being of hundreds of millions of human beings and their families. The success of the CD will ultimately benefit not the States which contribute to its work but the peoples who reap the benefits of the peace and security of nations.

The PRESIDENT (translated from Spanish): I thank the distinguished representative of Ecuador for his statement and the kind words addressed to the Chair. I now call on the distinguished representative of India, Ambassador Savitri Kunadi.

Ms. KUNADI (India): Mr. President, in extending to you our congratulations on the assumption of the presidency, allow me to express our deep satisfaction at seeing you, a representative of a country with which India enjoys warm and friendly relations, presiding over our deliberations. We would wish to place on record our appreciation to Ambassador Dembri of Algeria for his outstanding efforts as President of this Conference. Our appreciation also to Mr. Vladimir Petrovsky, the Secretary-General of this Conference, Mr. Abdelkader Bensmail, the Deputy Secretary-General, and the secretariat for their assistance and support. I take this opportunity to pay tribute to Ambassador Zahran of Egypt, who will be leaving Geneva shortly. This Conference will remember him for his invaluable contributions bringing to bear his vast years of experience based on the unique wisdom of the great country that he so ably represented. We wish him well. I would also like to take this opportunity to welcome Ambassador Amorim of Brazil and Ambassador Ayewoh of Nigeria, who have recently joined us.

My delegation has requested the floor to set out its views on the continuing inability of the CD to get down to substantive negotiations through the adoption of its programme of work. We express our deep disappointment at the current situation. We feel it is essential to dwell at some length on the reasons for the current impasse.

When the CD commenced its annual session in January this year there was an expectation that following the adoption of the agenda, agreement would soon follow on its programme of work. The agenda of the CD reflects a consensus among its members. This consensus should find reflection in a programme of work that contains all the elements of the CD agenda. But this has not happened.

India supported the proposal submitted by the Group of 21 on a programme of work contained in CD/1570. The Group arrived at this proposal after much internal deliberation and it represented a contribution by the Group to carry forward the work of the Conference. India also took note of the proposal contained in CD/1566 submitted by the Ambassador of the United States of America as the President of the CD following his consultations and representing his views on the CD's programme of work.

Between these two proposals for the programme of work - that is, CD/1570 and CD/1566 - we had on the table common elements which were readily apparent and on these there was no opposition from any delegation. These related to the establishment of ad hoc committees on fissile materials and NSAs and the reappointment of special coordinators on APLs and TIA as well as on the reappointment of special coordinators on review of the agenda, expansion of membership, and the improved and effective functioning of the Conference. It is important to note that the outstanding issues on which the CD needed to find common ground were only two - nuclear disarmament and outer space. That was the position in January and it is so now, six months later.

India shared the widespread sentiment in the CD that it was important to preserve these common elements while at the same time exploring ways and means of intensifying consultations on those elements - these being on nuclear

(Ms. Kunadi, India)

disarmament and on outer space - on which consensus still eluded the Conference. We supported the position shared by several others that there was need for a full exchange of views through the utilization of all the means of consultations that have been provided for in the rules of procedure.

As the single multilateral negotiating forum on disarmament, the Conference has an important functional role to discharge to meet the expectations of the international community. We must do everything that is possible to meet that expectation. But in cases where the Conference has not been able to commence negotiations on a specific item on its agenda, it is incumbent on the members to persist with efforts to find consensus, which, for this multilateral body negotiating matters concerning the national security of its member States, is its life-sustaining mechanism. We believe that the rules of procedure provide ample room for such consensus-building measures, provided of course that there is a willingness on the part of all backed by the necessary will to engage in a process of consultation and dialogue with the aim of finding consensus. At the same time, it is important that decisions of the CD are within the framework provided for in the rules of procedure.

The Group of 21 proposed in CD/1570, under agenda item 1, an ad hoc committee to negotiate a treaty banning the production of fissile material. India joined the consensus resolution 53/77 I on this issue in the last General Assembly. We, therefore, have had no difficulty in going along with the re-establishment of this ad hoc committee this year.

Under agenda item 1, the Group of 21 also proposed in CD/1570 an ad hoc committee on nuclear disarmament. In CD/1571, the Group of 21 submitted a mandate for this ad hoc committee. In submitting these proposals, the Group of 21 was reiterating its principled position on the highest priority it attached to the establishment of an ad hoc committee on nuclear disarmament under agenda item 1.

India has also taken careful note of proposals made this year on agenda item 1 by several delegations - South Africa, Egypt, Canada and a joint proposal by Belgium, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands and Norway. It was noteworthy that the desire to see some forward movement on nuclear disarmament was widespread, cutting across groups. It was left to the Conference to translate that sentiment into decisions to enable the commencement of actual negotiations. In craiting a programme of work that captured the sentiment that was so widely shared in the CD it was equally important for us to recognize that the mechanism of the Troika consultations, as contained in paragraph 1 of CD/1501 of last year, had not measured up to the expectations of the Conference and a more productive mechanism was therefore needed.

It may be recalled that paragraph 50 for the Final Document of SSOD-1 sets out guidelines for the CD to provide an effective and complementary process in the multilateral framework with regard to the substance of agenda item 1, namely, the cessation of the nuclear arms race and nuclear disarmament. While keeping this yardstick in view, we remain willing to consider, as a measure of flexibility, all proposals made by delegations with

(Ms. Kunadi, India)

the aim of carrying forward work on the substantive aspects of agenda item 1. It is in this context that India joined the Group of 21 in supporting the proposal for an ad hoc working group proposed in CD/1575 by the Ambassador of Venezuela as President of the CD.

It is important that we seek common elements with a view to substantive negotiations on nuclear disarmament in the near future. In this context, we wish to place on record our deep appreciation to Ambassador Dembri of Algeria for his diligent and tireless efforts as President of this Conference to explore all avenues for progress on nuclear disarmament. We have noted that as a result of the intensive consultations conducted by him, he was in a position to state in the last plenary that there was no delegation that was opposed to an ad hoc working group on nuclear disarmament, though a mandate required further consultations. We hope that a CD decision on establishing an ad hoc working group will be a stepping stone for future work in the Conference for negotiations on nuclear disarmament. This clearly shows the constructive approach taken by us in order to find a way out of our present impasse.

We support the position taken by the Group of 21 on the establishment of an ad hoc committee on PAROS. We believe that this proposal has widespread support in the CD, generated no doubt by concerns regarding current developments in ballistic missile defences leading to space becoming an integral dimension of warfare. The creditable work done by the Special Coordinator on PAROS, the Ambassador of Sri Lanka, last year and the developments in the First Committee, where the adoption of resolution 53/76 on outer space, which we had the privilege to co-sponsor, took place without a vote, gave reason for hope that it would be possible to establish an ad hoc committee this year as part of the programme of work. Again we have been disappointed, though last year no delegation was opposed in principle to the establishment of an ad hoc committee on PAROS. We support the intensification of consultations to reach agreement on a mechanism, with an appropriate mandate, that measures up to the aspirations of the international community that urgent negotiations be undertaken for ensuring the non-weaponization of outer space.

The current impasse in efforts to establish the CD's programme of work is related to the inflexible positions of a few delegations that have prevented agreement being reached on the two outstanding issues, nuclear disarmament and outer space. In this context, there have been proposals to seek the decision of the Conference on one or two elements on the programme of work. This artificial separation of the elements of work and attempts to give them automatic annual extensions is unprecedented in the CD, and is not provided for in the rules of procedure. To describe these proposals as interim does not make them any more acceptable. The automatic renewal of subsidiary bodies is unacceptable as it divorces the work of the CD from the overall reality in which that work is undertaken.

The CD is not an island and cannot pretend to be one. It acts as a mirror of the prevailing international security situation reflecting its trends, both positive and negative. The international disarmament agenda is

(Ms. Kunadi, India)

under strain, the dimensions of which can be judged by the stalling of the bilateral arms reduction process. The expectations raised by the end of the cold war of deep, sustainable and irreversible reductions in nuclear arsenals leading to their elimination have come, a decade later, to be well and truly belied. Nuclear dangers, including through the accidental or unauthorized use of nuclear weapons, have only increased. International concern about these dangers was demonstrated by the support extended by the General Assembly to the resolution on "Reducing nuclear danger" tabled by India. We would also like to highlight the request made by the General Assembly to the CD in resolution 53/78 D, co-sponsored by several delegations, including India, to commence negotiations in order to reach agreement on an international convention prohibiting the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons under any circumstances.

We are all aware that the success of negotiations in the CD depends to a large measure on the common recognition by delegations that the disarmament measures they negotiate are global and non-discriminatory and will therefore enhance their security. The quest for a unilateral security advantage for a few States goes contrary to the spirit that can sustain the negotiation and completion of credible disarmament instruments by this Conference. Surely, when individual States or groupings of States assert the right to exclusive standards of national security at the expense of the security of all others, this does not constitute a measure that promotes the realization of the international disarmament agenda.

Mr. President, let me conclude by reiterating my delegations's readiness to extend to you all possible support in your efforts to find consensus on a comprehensive programme of work with elements that meet the agreement of all delegations in this Conference.

The PRESIDENT (translated from Spanish): I thank the distinguished representative of India for her statement and for her kind words concerning both myself and the bonds of friendship between our peoples. I give the floor to the distinguished representative of the United Kingdom, Ambassador Ian Soutar.

Mr. SOUTAR (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland): Mr. President, may I first of all congratulate you on your assumption of the presidency of this Conference and assure you of the fullest support and cooperation of my delegation as you undertake this vital role at this particularly challenging time? I should also like to pay tribute to the efforts of your immediate predecessor, the distinguished Ambassador of Algeria, Ambassador Dembri, who spared no efforts in his attempt to steer the Conference to agreement on its programme of work. I hope very much that you will be able to rely on his wise counsel as you take up the baton.

On 27 May, the Director of the International Security at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office addressed the Conference, setting out the United Kingdom's non-proliferation and disarmament priorities. Among them, he mentioned our commitment to a responsible and transparent policy on legal transfers of small arms and to the EU Code of Conduct on Arms Exports.

(Mr. Soutar, United Kingdom)

Earlier this year, the United Kingdom published its first Annual Report on Strategic Export Controls. The United Kingdom wishes to draw the attention of members of the Conference to the report, which is published jointly by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, Department of Trade and Industry and the Ministry of Defence. Copies of the report are being made available to members of the Conference.

The report is in three parts. Part I sets out the United Kingdom's policy on export control issues at both the national and international levels; part II gives details of export licencing decisions taken between 2 May and 31 December 1997, including descriptions of which goods were licensed for export to which countries; and finally, part III gives details of actual exports from the United Kingdom in 1997, including values of arms exports to each country. We will publish the second Annual Report, covering exports and export licensing decisions in 1998, later this year.

We believe the publication of the Annual Report marks a step change in the level of transparency about the United Kingdom's export licensing policy. We have never before disclosed on a country-by-country basis this level of detail of equipment licensed for export, or physically exported from the United Kingdom. It puts the United Kingdom in the vanguard of arms-exporting countries in terms of transparency.

The Annual Report forms only one part of the United Kingdom's commitment to manage our arms exports in a responsible and transparent manner, and to encourage other countries to do likewise. Although greater transparency is not an end in itself, it can play a crucial role in promoting common understanding between arms-exporting countries of the pros and cons of certain transfers; increasing accountability, especially where Governments have made specific commitments on the regulation of arms exports; and building confidence between arms-importing States. Inter-State transparency can be just as important in fulfilling these purposes as public disclosure of information.

In this context, the United Kingdom emphasizes its continuing strong support for the role played by the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms as the main international instrument for disclosure of information about arms transfers and holdings. It is encouraging that participation in the Register continues gradually to increase, and that there have also been incremental improvements in the quality of the information provided, with increasing numbers of countries giving details of weapons types and models.

A key development in relation to inter-State transparency was the adoption in June 1998, during the United Kingdom presidency of the European Union, of the EU Code of Conduct on Arms Exports. The detailed criteria in the Code, against which all EU member States have agreed to assess arms exports licence applications, are underpinned by an information-sharing and consultation mechanism. This mechanism is the first of its kind to be applied by a group of countries to their conventional arms exports. Besides

(Mr. Soutar, United Kingdom)

allowing member States to exchange views on the application of the criteria in specific cases, the Code has also promoted constructive discussion on wider export control issues.

Another important forum for inter-State transparency is the Wassenaar Arrangement for Export Controls on Conventional Arms and Dual-Use Goods and Technologies. This arrangement has the potential to make a valuable contribution to international peace and stability by promoting responsibility in conventional arms transfers. As outlined in part I of the Annual Report, the United Kingdom has been at the forefront of efforts to increase the amount of information exchanged between participating States in the Arrangement. We will continue to work for the evolution of the Arrangement during the 1999 assessment of its operation.

The United Kingdom invites members of the Conference on Disarmament to take note of these developments and, where appropriate, to publish detailed reports on their own exports of arms and military equipment; participate in the United Nations Arms Register and work for an increase in the number of countries providing information as well as a broadening of the information exchanged; and subscribe to the principles of the EU Code of Conduct on Arms Exports and consider the scope for similar arrangements in other regions.

The PRESIDENT (translated from Spanish): I thank the distinguished Ambassador of the United Kingdom for his statement and kind words. The representative of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Ambassador Ri Tcheul, now has the floor.

Mr. RI Tcheul (Democratic People's Republic of Korea) (translated from French): Mr. President, I wish to congratulate you on taking the Chair of the Conference on Disarmament. Given your abilities, which I noted when you were Ambassador in Berne, I am sure that you will perform your task with success. I should also like to thank the Algerian Ambassador, Mohamed-Salah Dembri, for his major contribution to developing a compromise on the programme of work.

I wish to begin by touching on some matters relating to nuclear disarmament as well as to space weapons which remain unresolved despite the endeavours of many member States. As Coordinator of the Group of 21, my delegation has had an opportunity to consult many members of the Conference on Disarmament, particularly those of the Group of 21 on these matters. In relation to nuclear disarmament, the success or failure of our efforts to break out of the present deadlock hinge completely on the fact that all member States regard nuclear disarmament as a universal concern and that every country recognizes that it has a legitimate right to take part freely in the nuclear disarmament process. To refuse open and transparent discussion of ways and means with all the countries concerned is an indication of a lack of willingness to abandon nuclear weapons entirely. All member States of the Conference on Disarmament have a legitimate right to discuss this matter without any restriction, because nuclear weapons are a common danger.

The continuing development of nuclear weapon capabilities places every country in the world within reach of nuclear weapons. The potential threat of

(Mr. Ri Tcheul, Democratic People's Republic of Korea)

nuclear weapons has even become more imminent because of some elements contained in the "strategic concept" that was very recently announced. This new concept indicates that nuclear weapons must be improved and could be used to settle political problems such as ethnic conflicts. The idea that nuclear weapons could be used as a means of protecting members of a military alliance is a declaration of nuclear proliferation. It runs counter to the burning desire of humankind for peace, security and similarly for a world free of nuclear weapons. We cannot leave such an important issue as that of nuclear disarmament in the hands of one or two nuclear Powers. It is a natural right of every member country to take part in discussions concerning nuclear disarmament since this is a question directly related to the interests and the survival of each and every one of us. There can be no excuse for ignoring such a sovereign right.

Without the complete elimination of nuclear weapons, it will be impossible to prevent high-handedness on the international scene, and weak countries will always remain victims of power politics. As last week's Herald Tribune pointed out, world leaders note that the United States has once again obtained what it wanted in Kosovo, thanks to cruise missiles and its nuclear arsenal. This use of nuclear weapons and the air campaign against Yugoslavia, carried out with no regard for the United Nations, show that no country is safe from such interference.

The present situation in the Korean peninsula is a great source of concern. Using the incident that happened last week as a pretext, a large American military fleet is massing in the Korean peninsula. The aircraft carrier Kittyhawk, having completed its mission in Yugoslavia, is heading for the Korean peninsula. The American troops stationed in South Korea are backed up by AC-130 planes and multipurpose FA-18 combat aircraft, followed by 12 F-15 aircraft and several thousand military personnel. American forces based in Japan, including the aircraft carrier Constellation and B-52 strategic bombers, are awaiting orders. Furthermore, the United States intends to send to South Korea RC-135 aircraft, EA-6B reconnaissance aircraft, AWACS and nuclear submarines of the Los Angeles and Aegis type. These military deployments, coinciding with many recent acts of provocation at sea, seriously threaten us because these irresponsible acts could be followed up by fresh military activity in another part of our planet.

In a desire for peace and security, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea is ready to ensure that anyone touching its territory will pay a very high price. Since the Democratic People's Republic of Korea is under constant threat of nuclear weapons, it holds to its position of principle that all nuclear weapons must be destroyed as quickly as possible. It calls for the establishment of an ad hoc committee or some other appropriate mechanism with the specific task of building a world without nuclear weapons. The treaty banning fissile material must include a system for monitoring materials loaded into nuclear warheads and those which are stockpiled. This is the only way to ensure that the treaty contributes to nuclear disarmament.

I should like to raise the issue of space weapons. I think we could apply to this question the saying: "Prevention is better than cure", whose

(Mr. Ri Tcheul, Democratic People's Republic of Korea)

meaning seems simple but very profound. At a time when we are arduously striving to eliminate nuclear weapons, a dreadful scourge which originated decades ago, we now face another danger, that of the emergence of a new threat with incalculable consequences. If space weapons are developed and if they are deployed, a new kind of arms race would ensue, heightening the nuclear threat. A country or countries deploying space weapons could demand a treaty prohibiting the fresh deployment of space weapons by others in order to dominate space. Concern is growing on this subject.

It is certain that the development of space weaponry would ineluctably lead to a new arms race. The emergence of the anti-ballistic missile defence programme is a more obvious threat from space weaponry. The country with the largest nuclear arsenal in the world, with its powerful military forces, and another country which was the first victim of the nuclear bomb, are jointly developing this dreadful system. While this dangerous action has been undertaken under the cover of defence, nobody is so naive as to believe that. It is nothing other than an offensive weapon system designed to maintain military supremacy and impose their will on others. The arms race may force the new generation to live, not under the sun and the stars, but under the constant threat of monstrous weaponry. My delegation considers that all attempts to arm space and to develop anti-missile defence systems must be thwarted in time, and that in order to do so an ad hoc committee must be set up on the prohibition of the deployment of space weapons. This is the only balanced compromise capable of securing consensus.

The PRESIDENT (translated from Spanish): I thank the distinguished Ambassador of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. This led to the closure of the list of speakers, but I see that there are other delegations which have asked to take the floor. The representative of Germany, Ambassador Seibert, has the floor.

Mr. SEIBERT (Germany): I have requested the floor not to offer a general statement but to make a comment at the end of the second part of this year's session. Let me first congratulate you, Mr. President, on the assumption of the presidency of this Conference at this crucial juncture. We fully trust in your diplomatic skills and wisdom to guide our work forward. You can count on the full support of the German delegation in proceeding in the way you have set out in your introductory statement. At the same time, I would like to thank your predecessors for all their efforts to reach a consensus that would allow this Conference to get down to work at last. I want to thank, in particular, your immediate predecessor, Ambassador Dembri of Algeria, for his broad and very intensive consultations and the valuable informal proposals he has circulated on the two outstanding issues. These proposals - let me call them the "Dembri proposals" for short - have brought us very close to success. I fully share the evaluation that the Conference has moved closer to a consensus - perhaps closer than at any other time during this year's session. It is important to maintain this momentum.

I would thus like to encourage you, Mr. President, to continue on the course you have charted today. I strongly believe that on the basis of the Dembri proposals, possibly with some minor modifications, it should be

(Mr. Seibert, Germany)

possible to achieve consensus in this Conference in the near future. If consensus should not yet be possible in the last few days of this part of our session, then we should at least aim at an agreement at the very outset of the next part, if we do not wish to see the Conference end another session, its third session, without having undertaken any real negotiations. Even if we are able to reach consensus soon, there will still be only limited time left for substantive work. The best we can hope to achieve this year is to create a solid foundation for the immediate commencement of fruitful negotiations next year. The success of our efforts this year will, therefore, not be judged at the end of the session, it will be judged in January of next year, when we either resume the negotiations where we left off this year or we enter into a new round of futile discussions on a programme of work. If we were to repeat the extremely dismal precedent of this year, if decisions reached by this Conference after months of difficult deliberations should turn out once again to be relevant for only a few weeks, then the role of this Conference as the sole multilateral negotiating forum on disarmament would be seriously damaged.

Mr. President, another matter that is long overdue is a decision on a limited expansion of the membership of the Conference as proposed by Ambassador Hofer last year. I hope that you will be able to obtain agreement also on this question, so that we can, finally, welcome Ecuador, Ireland, Kazakhstan, Malaysia and Tunisia in our midst.

Mr. President, I wish you all success in your difficult task at this decisive moment and I appeal to all delegations to support your efforts in a spirit of compromise and cooperation.

May I take this opportunity to welcome our new colleagues in this Conference, Ambassadors Amorim of Brazil and Ayewoh of Nigeria? My delegation is looking forward to cooperating with them. Finally, I would also like to express my best wishes to Ambassador Zahran of Egypt, who will be leaving Geneva shortly. We wish him well.

The PRESIDENT (translated from Spanish): I thank the representative of Germany for his statement and his good wishes. The representative of the Republic of Korea has the floor.

Mr. KIM (Republic of Korea): Mr. President, I congratulate you, first of all, on your assumption of this important duty and assure you of the fullest support of my delegation in discharging your responsibility. My delegation also commends the tireless efforts of the former President, Ambassador Dembri of Algeria, in seeking a solution to the current impasse on the programme of work.

My delegation did not plan to take the floor today. However, after listening to the statement by the delegation of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, who stated that there had been an act of provocation last week against North Korea off the west coast of the Korean peninsula, I find myself obliged to respond to it in order to prevent my colleagues and the delegations present in this Conference hall from being misled.

(Mr. Kim, Republic of Korea)

I do not believe that the Conference on Disarmament is the relevant forum for dealing with this sort of issue. Such an issue should be discussed and resolved directly between the two parties concerned.

Not only for this particular incident of last week, but also for any topic regarding inter-Korean relations, the Republic of Korea has consistently requested that the Democratic People's Republic of Korea sit together with us and participate in dialogue in an effort to seek solutions.

The incident in question last week began with continued intrusions across the Northern Limit Line (NLL) in the West Sea of the peninsula by North Korean warships and fishing boats. The intrusion started on 7 June and was repeated until 15 June. Some intrusions were as deep as 3 nautical miles south of the NLL.

During these 10 days, the naval forces of the Republic of Korea patiently but persistently warned the Democratic People's Republic of Korea not to cross the Northern Limit Line, which has existed for many decades, and has been acknowledged by both sides.

The Government of the Republic of Korea is determined to pursue its policy of engagement with North Korea with the utmost perseverance. Our policy, however, will be firmly based on strong and vigilant defence against any threat to peace and security on the Korean peninsula.

The PRESIDENT (translated from Spanish): I thank the distinguished representative of the Republic of Korea for his statement. Does any other delegation wish to take the floor? The representative of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Mr. Ri Thae Gun, has the floor.

Mr. RI Thae Gun (Democratic People's Republic of Korea): I had not any intention of spoiling this meeting, which is purely dedicated to discussing the disarmament issue, which is very important to everyone and to mankind. The only thing I would like to mention here is that what we said is based on reality and the truth. So I am not going to make any counter-arguments to the statement made by my South Korean colleague. I would only like to read one sentence of text from the Armistice Agreement signed in 1953 between the United States General and our side, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. According to the agreement, paragraph B of article 13 of the Armistice Agreement stipulates that only five islands shall be under the military control of the United Nations forces out of the isles located in the West Sea of Korea, north and west of the boundary line between South Hwanghae province and Kyonggi province. This clearly indicates that the above five islands are located in our own territorial waters and that there is no mention of the boundaries clearly dividing the control area between both parts. The incident which has occurred is purely staged in the territorial waters of North Korea.

The PRESIDENT (translated from Spanish): Thank you. The information shared with the Conference is noted. The representative of the United States, Ambassador Grey, has the floor.

Mr. GREY (United States of America): I had not planned to speak today, Mr. President, but let me first express my pleasure that the alphabet has put you in charge during this crucial time, and let me also thank Ambassador Dembri for his hard work, which I am sure will continue to be of value to you.

Just very briefly, without getting into a debate, I would like to associate myself with the remarks made by my Korean ally.

The PRESIDENT (translated from Spanish): I thank the representative of the United States. Does any other delegation wish to take the floor? If not, I think this concludes our business for today, and the second part of our annual session.

The next plenary meeting of the Conference will be held on Thursday, 29 July 1999, at 10 a.m. You may be sure that, during this inter-sessional period, we shall endeavour to keep up the momentum from previous Presidential terms and try to make the maximum possible progress in our work. It remains only for me to take leave of you with a single word: In sha' Allah!

The meeting rose at 11.30 a.m.